



NDP
NOVA SCOTIA NDP

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NSNDP RESPONSE - CANADIAN PAEDIATRIC SOCIETY

1. Strengthening child and youth mental health and mental health care

If elected, what will your party do to meet the mental health needs of children and youth resulting from the global pandemic and ensure timely access to publicly funded mental health treatment and resources?

The NDP recognizes that mental health is just as important as physical health, and that prompt attention to the mental health needs of children and youth is particularly important. Barriers to publicly-funded mental health services have created a two-tiered system in our province. Wait times for children and adolescents accessing mental health appointments are routinely long, and particularly in rural areas, sometimes more than three months.

Nova Scotians report one of the highest lifetime prevalence rates of mental health disorders in Canada.

To start, we need to fund mental health services properly. Experts recommend a minimum of 10 per cent. Meeting this baseline would mean millions of dollars more for frontline services.

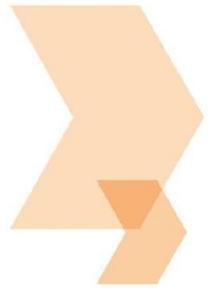
The NDP is committed to:

- *Establishing a Mental Health Bill of Rights and moving to funding mental health services to the World Health Organization's recommended 10 per cent of the health budget.*
- *Making same-day/next-day in-person mental health appointments available across the province.*
- *Integrating mental health services with other services associated with mental distress, such as education, family supports and housing.*



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When you or someone you love is facing a mental health emergency, you should not have to choose between waiting weeks or months to get an appointment or calling the police. Emergency crisis response services should be equally available, no matter where in the province you live. We have been told that such services can be especially important for youth.

The NDP is committed to:

- *Establishing emergency mental health crisis teams across the province, like the successful models in other jurisdictions. These crisis teams will include a variety of mental health care professionals, such as social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, and nurses*

2. Creating safe and healthy environments

If elected, what will your party do to reduce rates of childhood poverty and food insecurity and ensure safer and healthier homes, schools and communities for children and youth?

We can make life easier for parents and students by delivering more programs through our schools. The NDP is committed to:

- *Establishing a universal school food program that would provide at least one meal during the school day with an emphasis on foods that are locally, ecologically, and ethically produced, nutritious, and culturally appropriate.*

The NDP has outlined a path to making Nova Scotia the first jurisdiction in North America that eliminates poverty, so that this is a province where everyone can afford the basics—food, shelter, utilities.

The NDP is committed to:

- *Introducing a \$15 minimum wage and getting Nova Scotia on the road to a living wage to make sure working people can afford to live.*





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- *Increasing income assistance rates to get people out of poverty.*
- *Lowering everyone's bills by limiting rent increases with permanent rent control and rapidly increasing the number of affordable housing units, in addition to the child care improvements and universal school food program.*

A Child and Youth Advocate Office that operates at arms length from government and can help ensure government actions and policies are considering the needs of children and youth. The NDP is committed to:

- *Introducing a Child and Youth Advocate office to ensure that government policies and programs respect the rights of children and youth.*
- *Making post-secondary education free for former children and youth in care.*

Integration and ease of access for services to children and families is a basic principle of the Early Years strategy started by the former NDP government. Progress has been slower and much more poorly planned under the current government, as a recent Auditor General's report illustrated.

The NDP is committed to:

- *Investing in programs that will make schools hubs for services for children and their families including the healthy meals, a school based oral health program, and more supports for students with disabilities.*